

PRESENT-DAY EASTER ISLANDERS

217

scribed by Jorge as follows: the father is the head (mayor) of the family while the first born son is the head of the children, thus the father and the first born son must stand in special relationship to one another and to the total family. 593
784
858

ADOLESCENCE

There are no formal puberty rites existing on the island today, but the period at which a boy is said to become a man is reasonably well fixed in the minds of the people. According to Jorge and Roberto, in earlier days a boy did not become a man, nor did he do a man's work, until he reached the age of twenty, his time being occupied until then in play and fun. Today, however, most native children go to the Chilean-run school from the ages of nine until twelve, after which the boys, at least, are expected to start doing some work. Thus, when Juan Atan's wife became ill and he was unable to come to work, he sent his thirteen year old son to take his place. Although doing a full day's work at a man's job, this youth was consistently referred to as a *poki*, or boy. Some indication of when he would be regarded as a man was presented on the job one day. My workmen caught the boy examining one of the many pictographs at Orongo called *komari*, which stylistically depict a vulva. The men immediately began to joke him terrifically, and during the joking Jorge turned to me and remarked, "He will be ready for that in another two years." From this, it would appear that fifteen years of age may be taken as the approximate age for a young man to enter into mature sex relations and, in general, become a man. 884
[88]

Further evidence along this line was brought forward during a discussion of who could, or could not, vote in the election of the three natives who stand as representatives of the people before the governor of the island. Among the natives there was no fixed age at which a person could vote, the consistent theme being that one could vote when one became a man. Asked if the Atan youth could vote, they informed me that he could not as he was still a *poki*. It was only after considerable questioning and discussion that my workers came to the conclusion that a person of approximately fifteen or sixteen years of age had reached the age of manhood and had the right to vote. An approximately similar age for womanhood appears to hold for girls, as well. At least a search of the government population records showed the earliest age for the marriage of girls was fifteen. 884
[582]

COURTING

Unmarried girls from about fourteen or fifteen onward are given complete sexual freedom which does not begin and end with a possible suitor but is maintained with any passing boy friend. Such relationships are taken quite as casually 836